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NID revision; O/CI and O/ME responsibility

22 December 1954

MEMORANDUM TO THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR/INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Responsibility for Revision of the National Intelligence Digest

REFERENCE: Memorandum to the AD/NI and AD/CI from the DD/I,
21 January 1954

1. The National Intelligence Digest is currently revised monthly on the basis of contributions from O/CI and O/ME. Under the terms of the referenced memorandum, "O/NI will be responsible for preparing estimative sections of the Digest, and O/CI will give support by supplying current intelligence (including material for the preparation of graphics) from the O/CI Handbook, or additionally as agreed upon." The memorandum goes on to give O/ME final responsibility for the production of the Digest.

2. I believe that the Digest was originally intended to contain broad current and estimative intelligence. As I understand it, the inclusion of general political, economic and military intelligence would fulfill a consumer need not met by other publications and would obviate the need for frequent revision of individual sections.

3. Since the present division of responsibility was assigned, two problems have arisen:

a. The O/CI contribution must be considerably rewritten in O/ME in order to meet the broad intelligence requirements of the Digest and to permit integration with O/ME material. The "Current Issues" section of the O/CI Handbook which is usually submitted by O/CI as its Digest contribution is, by its very nature, detailed and perishable and cannot be directly incorporated into the Digest. O/ME edits the O/CI material, but the substance of the O/CI contribution is such as to narrow the scope of the Digest, and to require the inclusion of too detailed current intelligence. In the past several months some sections of the Digest have had to be revised simply to update perishable factual information which probably should not have been included in the first place.

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b. Keeping the Digest up to date through the present monthly revision process has strained O/HIC's limited resources. O/HIC's TO does not permit the full-time assignment of any staff member to the Digest, and it does not seem that the priority of the Digest warrants a change in O/HIC organization. As a result I feel that the quality of the Digest has suffered.

In view of these problems, I believe a re-evaluation of α/ME and α/CI responsibility is indicated.

4. In order to achieve the desired hybrid scope of the Digest, I believe that responsibility for preparing all material should be given to O/31. Program revision would then not be required except in the case of major developments in particular countries, or upon publication of a National Intelligence Estimate. We believe that both current and estimative intelligence requirements for the Digest could be met by the inclusion of summarised estimates, supplemented by a general description of the current situation. This latter material could be checked with O/31.

5. In order to insure the currency and usefulness of the Digest we believe that O/MS should make monthly revisions as necessary, but undertake a comprehensive review of all Digest sections twice yearly. Findings would be summarised and incorporated in the Digest upon their publication and major current developments (e.g., a change in government as opposed to a reshuffling of a cabinet) would be incorporated as a matter of routine on a monthly basis. I believe that such a bi-annual review could be carried out by the assignment of one or two O/MS staff members working about a week on a full-time basis. This would not place an unacceptable strain upon O/MS.

6. There will of necessity be some change in the nature of the current intelligence portions of the MID since they will be much more general than at present. I believe, however, that this will not be a real problem and, in fact, would result in a more uniform, higher quality product.

7. As an alternative to the procedures suggested here, I have explored the possibility of having O/CI undertake complete responsibility for the NID. Conversations with a number of people have led me to conclude that this would be an unwise

8. Recommendations: That the procedures outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5 above be authorized by the DD/I for implementation.

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SHIGUAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Art Museum

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